SAPTA, extending preferential tariff concessions to the least developed countries (LDCs) in the region on non-reciprocal basis, improving transport infrastructure and transit facilities in the region, expanding SAARC visa Exemption Scheme by inclusion of SAARC functionaries members of the Executive Committee of APEX Trade Bodies and the businessmen and holding the 2nd SAARC Trade Fair and the 2nd meeting of the SAARC Commerce Ministers in Pakistan towards the end of 1997.

World Bank Loan

2732. SHRI BANWARI LAL PUROHIT: Will the Minister for the STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the world Bank proposes to increase its aid to India;

(b) if so, the present position of World Bank loan towards India;

(c) the projects for which the Government intend to have more aid form the World Bank alongwith the details of the more aid to be received; and

(d) the time by which the loans are likely to be repaid?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) and (b) World Bank's pledges to India have normally been in the range of US $ 2.5 - 3 billion and during India Development Forum Meeting held in July' 97, World Bank pledged US $ 2.9 billion to India which is higher than the pledge for 1996 which was $ 2.5 billion.

(c) There are a number of projects posed to the World Bank for possible assistance in the Bank FY 98 (July 97 - June 98). These projects are Coal Sector Rehabilitation, Hazardous Waste Management, A.P. Restructuring, National Agriculture Technology, UP Forestry, Kerala Forestry, UP Diversified Agriculture, Rajasthan Power, Haryana Power, Gujarat Highway, UP Basic Education-II, DPEP-III, Powergrid-II, Food & Drug Capacity Building. These projects are at different stages of processing and the details including the amount of assistance for each project will be known only after the finalisation of the project proposals with the World Bank.

(d) The rapayment of loans is made as per the conditions stipulated in respective loan agreements. IBRD loans are repayable in 20 years, inclusive of 5 years grace period and IDA credits are repayable in 35 to 40 years inclusive of 10 years grace period.

National Dairy Development Board

2733. SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Dairy Development Board and the National Cooperative Dairy Federation have requested the Union Government to remove milk products from the lists of items imported under open General Licence; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A proposal has been received in the Ministry of Commerce from National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India that in order to maintain international competitiveness and repid growth of the Indian Dairy Industry, skimmed milk powder and butter oil be shifted from open General Licence to the negative list in the current Export and Import Policy. However, the proposal was examined in the Ministry of Commerce but was not found acceptable.

[Translation]

Loan to Regional Commercial Banks by RBI

2734. SHRI FAGGAN SINGH KULESTE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any provision for giving loans to regional commerical banks by the Reserve Bank of India;

(b) if so, the names of the schemes for which it is given;

(c) whether any time limit has been fixed for it; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (d) Presumably, the Hon'ble Member is referring to financial support extended by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to Regional Rural Banks (RRBs). While RBI does not directly grant any loans to RRBs, RBI extends financial support to National Bank of Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD) from out of its General Lines of Credit (GLC) I & II to enable NABARD to provide, inter-alia, short term re-finance to RRBs and Cooperative Institutions for Seasonal Agricultural Operations (SAO), marketing of crops, marketing and distribution of agricultural inputs, other activities for promotion of agriculture and for production and/or marketing activities of artisans, small scale industries and village and cottage industries etc. RBI has sanctioned, under GLC I & II, for the year 1997-98, limits amounting to Rs. 4850 and Rs. 850 crores respectively in favour of NABARD.

[English]

Setting up of Washeries

2735. PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) the number of contracts awarded for setting up of washeries during the last three years on B.O.O basis stating the areas where the washeries are to be set up;

(b) the progress made in this regard so far; and